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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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O 151430Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1292

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 2145

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

1.9. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS/ PFOR JO US XF
SUBJECT: HUSSEIN VISIT-THE POLITICAL SETTING

1. SUMMARY. THIS CABLE IS TO BRING YOU UP TO DATE IN BRIEF TERMS SINCE YOUR FEBRUARY VISIT AND TO PROVIDE SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE KING, THE VISIT HIS POITICAL PROBLEMS AND HIS IDEAS AND MOOD ON THE PEACE PROCESS. THIS IS FOR HIM MOST IMPORTANT VISIT HE HAS EVER MADE TO WASHINGTON OR TO ANYWHERE. THE US-JORDANIAN RELATIONSHIP COULD WELL BE DETERMINED FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS THE VISIT COMES AT A CRUCIAL TIME TIME FOR PEACE AND FOR THE US ROLE IN THE AREA. THE KING HAS A CURRENT DOMESTIC PROBLEM BECAUSE SOME OF HIS CONSERVATIVE SUPPORTERS SEEM TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE US (WITH ISRAELI PRESSURE AND SUPPORT) IS TEMPTED TO DUMP HIM IN FAVOR OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND ON THE EAST BANK. ON THE PEACE PROCESS THE KING DOES NOT WANT TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE DESCENDENT OF THE PROPHET WHO LOST JERUSALEM. HIS EMOTIONAL HISTORIACAAL AND POLITICAL TIES TO THE WEST BANK AR STRONG. HE IS A MODERATE AND IS PERSUADED THAT NEGOATION
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IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR PEACE. HE WILL TAKE RISKS TO BRING PEACE TO BRING BACK THE WEST BANK FOR THE ARABS AND TO HELP US WITH COMMON STRATEGY TO DO THIS. HE WILL NOT HOWEVER COMMIT POLITICAL SUICIDE AND WILL WANT TO PRESURRVE STRONG ARAB TIES. ON SPECIFICS HE WILL SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINATION ON THE WEST BANK AND AN INDEPENDENT STATE IF NECESSARY

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BUT PREFERS CLOSE LINKS TO JORDAN. ON PROCEDURE
HE WILL GO ALONG WITH AN INDEPDENT PLO DELGATION
LIKES THE IDEA OF UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION AND
WOULD CONSIDER INCORPORATING PALESTINIANS FROM THE
WEST BANK AND PERHAPS EVEN PLO MEMBERS IN THE JOR-
DANIAN DELEGATION IF THAT WOULD INTEREST US AND THE
OTHER ARABS AND HELP TO BRING PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE KING-HUSSEIN WITH 25 YEARS AS MONARCH
HAS AGED AND CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS I HAVE BEEN
HERE-- YEARS SHAPED AND HONED BY TRAGEDY AND TRAUMA.
HUSSEIN IS STILL SUFFERING ACUTELY THE LOSS OF
QUEEN ALYA. WHATEVER THE RELATINSHIP WAS IN LIFE, IN DEATH THE
PARTING IS A SEVERE BLOW TO HIM. HE IS
STILL IN PHYSICAL PAIN WITH A CRUSHED BACK WHICH GIVES
HIM AGONY AT TIMES OF GREAT STRESS AND PHYSICAL
EXERTION SUCH AS THAT WHICH RECENTLY COMBINED AGAINST HIM IN
THE QUEENS DEATH AND MOSLEM MOURNIG RITES US
NEWSPAPER ATTACKS AND ACUTE UNCERTAINTIES OVER THE
FUTURE AND HIS TIES TO THE US

3.THE MOOD- FOR HUSSEIN THIS MAY WELL BE THE MOST
MOMENTOUS TRIP OF HIS LIFE UP UNTIL NOW-- IN SOME WAYS
COMPARABLE TO THE LEGENDARY 20-- MINUTE DASH HE IS
SUPPOSED TO HAVE MADE ONE NIGHT IN 1957 TO TURN BACK
MUTINEERING BEDOUIN SOLDIERS WHO HAD
BEEN MISLED BY MISCHEVIEIOUS AND DISLOYAL ARMY OFFICERS
INTO TRYING TO OVERTHROW HIS REGIME. HE SAVED HIS
LIFE AND THRONE THEN. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE US
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AND THE US ROLE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PEACE IS SO
CRUCIAL TO HIM THAT HE CAN WELL LOOK ON THIS
WASHINGTON VISIT AS HAVING THE SAME IMPORTANCE
AND THE SAME POTENTIAL RESULTS. THE STYLE AND
MEANING OF THE US-JORDANIANS RELATIONSHIP HAVE
CHANGED OVER THE YEARS HE SEES AND HAS SEEN
POSSIBLE SHIFTS IN THE US WORLD ROLE, A KEY FACTOR
FOR HIM IS OUR VIEW OF THE PEACE SETTLEMENT AND
THE ISRAELIS. HE WAS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE FAILURE
TO REACH A DISENGATEMENT AGREEMENT IN 1974 ON THE WEST BANK,
BY THE CONGRESS OVER THE HAWK DEAL IN 1975, AND BY
WHAT HE SAY IN 1976 AS THE US LOSS OF LEADERSHIP ON
WORLD ISSUES, EPTIOMISED BY OUR WITHDRAWL FROM VIETNAM.
HE IS BUOYED AND ENCOURAGED BY HHE NEW SPIRIT ABROAD
IN THIS ADMINISTRATION DESPITE SOME CERCERN OVER
THE WASHINGTON POST CIA STORY AND UNCERTAINTY OF THE
ADMINISTRATIONS ATTITUDE OVER THAT ASPECT OF OUR
RELATIONSHIP. HE WILL USE THE VISIT TO PROBE OUR
IDEAS, MORE IMPORTANTLY HE WILL WANT TO FORM SOME

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FIRST-HAND JUDGEMENT ON OUR GRIT AND STAYING POWER.
FACTORS THAT HE BELIEVES WILL BE VITAL FOR THE US
ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. POLITICA--INTERNALLY THE KING STILL ENJOYS HIGH
PRESTIGE AND POWER. SOME LOCAL CONSERVATIVES HAVE
TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF RUMORS AND HASTY CONCLUSIONS TO
PUT IT ABORAD THAT THE US IS OUT TO DUMP HIM IN
FAVOR OF AN EAST BANK PALESTINIANS HOMELAND, IGNORING
THE ARAB IMPERATIVE IN ANY SETTELEMTN OF A RETURN
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY BY ISRAEL. (THESE FEAR
HAVE INCIDENTALLY BEEN EXPRESSED BY JORDANIANS AT
VARIOUS TIMES OVER THE PAST YEARS.) THERE ARE
COMPLAINTS TOO OF LOW PAY, INFLATION AND CORRUPTION
THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS PAROCHIAL AND EAST BANKER
IN ITS OUTLOOK. THE KINGS PRINCIPAL FOREIGN
AFFAIRS ADVISOR(ROYAL COUR SHIEF SHARAF) IS YOUNG,
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 2145

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

AN ARAB NATIONALIST AT HEART, EAST BANK IN HIS
SYMPATHIES AND ABOVE ALL CAUTIOUS ABOUT JORDAN'S
TAKING TOO ACTIVE AND TOO FORWARD A WEST BANK NEGOTIATING
ROLE. THE FACT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL NOT BE
ACCOMPANYING THE KING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS

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TESTIFIES TO THE LATTER'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ROLE--OR
MORE CORRECTLY THE LACK OF IT. THE KING HIMSELF
IS MORE INCLINED TO ACTIVISM ONCE HE MAKES UP HIS
MIND; STALEMATE AND STICKING TIGHT
ARE AGAINST HIS OWN NATURE. THE KING, AT THE SAME
TIME, CAN USE SOME REASSURANCE OF THE CONTINUING
NATURE OF OUR TIES AND SUPPORT TO SHORE UP HIS OWN
DOMESTIC AND INTER-ARAB OPINION.

5. PEACE-IN THE CONFUSING WELTER OF IDEAS ON THE
FUTURE PEACE A FEW POINTS FROM HERE STAND OUT
CLEARLY. THE KING'S TIES TO THE WEST BANK ARE STILL
STRONG. IF WE COULD TELL HIM TOMORROW THAT THERE IS
A GOOD CHANCE THAT HE COULD GET THE WHOLE TERRITORY
BACK FROM ISRAEL AND ALSO RESOLVE THE JERUSALEM
PROBLEM SATISFACTORILY, I BELIEVE HE WOULD MOVE ON
HIS OWN, DESPITE THE OTHER ARABS, AND ESPECIALLY
THE PLO, TO TRY TO BRING IT ABOUT. SHORT OF THAT,
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HE WILL WANT TO TEST THE WIND MORE CAREFULLY. HE
HAS NO HANGUPS, AS OTHER ARABS MAY HAVE, ON
NORMALIZATION MEASURES WITH ISRAEL, BUT HE CANNOT
AFFORD TO GET TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT OF SADAT OR ASAD
ON THIS ISSUE. AS FOR THE PALESTINIANS, HIS LONG
YEARS OF ASSOCIATION HAVE LED HIM TO DISTRUST AND
DISLIKE (IN THAT ORDER) ABU AMMAR (ARAFAT) AND ARAFAT'S
FRIENDS IN THE PLO. OTHER PALESTINIANS OF A MODERATE
PERSUASION IN AND OUT (AND ESPECIALLY OUT) OF THE PLO
HE SEES AS MORE CONGENIAL. HE HAS TRADITIONALLY
MAINTAINED A MODERATE AND CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE TOWARDS
IMPORTANT PALESTINAIAN COMMUNITY IN EAST BANK. HE
WOULD PROBABLY SUPPORT THE CARRYING OUT OF AN ACT
OF SELF-DETERMINATION ON THE WEST BANK. HE STRONGLY
BELIEVES LINKS BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK ARE
NATURAL AND PROBABLY INEVITABLE FOR THE FUTURE.

6. PEACE PROCEDURES-ON PROCEDURAL ISSUES THE KING
IS LESS CLEAR. HE WILL WANT TO GO TO GENEVA AS A
CONFRONTATION STATE. HE HAS SAID HE LIKES THE
IDEA OF A UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION. HE CANNOT
OPPOSE, BUT DOES NOT PERSONALLY RELISH (AS OPPOSED
TO SOME OF HIS ADVISORS), THE THOUGHT OF THE PLO
ATTENDING ON ITS OWN. HE WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT,
IF WE AND THE OTHER ARABS THOUGHT IT WOULD MAKE
PROGRESS, A JOINT DELEGATION AT GENEVA WITH
WEST BANK PALESTINIANS AND ONE OR A FEW PLO MEMBERS.
HE STRONGLY BELIEVES THE PROCEDURAL ISSUES
SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AND DECIDED UPON IN LIGHT OF THE
SUBSTANTIVE SOLUTION WHICH THE U.S. BELIEVES CAN

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BE ACHIEVED.

7. HUSSEIN'S OBJECTIVES IN WASHINGTON-- THE KING
WILL THUS VERY MUCH WANT TO HAVE OUR VIEWS AND
ASSESSMENTS. HE HAS ALREADY TOLD ME HE WILL WANT
TO ASK THE PRESIDENT FOR A PRIVATE MEEETING SIMILAR
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TO THE MEETINGS HELD BY RABIN AND SADAT. HE WILL
BE PLEASED IF WE CAN GIVE HIM OUR IDEAS FOR A
STRATEGY FOR PEACE IN THE AREA; IF WE CANNOT, HE
WILL PROBE AND ASK FOR ELEMENTS OF OUR THINKING.
HE IS AT HIS BEST IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS, WHICH HE
DOES GENERALLY WITH FRANKNESS AND CANDOR. HE WILL
ALSO PROBABLY HAVE PREPARED AN OVERVIEW STATEMENT OF
HIS OWN AND HIS ADVISORS' IDEAS ASSESSING THE AREA
AND THE CHANCES FOR PEACE. EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT
HIM THE DANGERS OF OVER-OPTIMISM AND INDEED THAT AT
TIMES A LITTLE BIT OF CONSTRUCTIVE PESSIMISM IS A
KIND OF PSYCHIC INSURANCE POLICY AGAINST TOO PRO-
FOUND DISAPPOINTMENT.

8. HUSSEIN AND THE ARABS-HE BELIEVES THAT SADAT
IS TOO OPTIMISTIC. HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH ASAD IS LESS CLOSE THAN WHEN IN 1976 THE TWO
FOUND THEMSELVES ALONE AND ISOLATED IN THE ARAB
WORLD AFTER SINAI II AND ON LEBANON. WITH THE
SAUDIS, THERE ARE IMBALANCES AND HISTORIC DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA THAT ARE MASKED BY A POLITE-
NESS AND A SENSE OF ARAB PROTOCOL. BUT THESE FACTORS
IN THE LONG RUN COVER A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS ITS
MUTUALLY PROFITABLE ASPECTS.

9. WHAT SHOULD THE U.S. DO?- MOST OF ALL THE KING WILL
WANT TO HEAR EXACTLY HOW WE FEEL ABOUT HIM.
JORDAN IS SMALL AND HAS BEEN CLOSELY TIED TO US. HIS
HISTORY WITH DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS HAS BEEN MORE
UNCERTAIN THAN WITH REPUBLICANS.
IN LIGHT OF HIS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS SOME PUBLIC STATE-
MENT OF OUR CONTINUING TIES AND CONTINUING SUPPORT
FOR HIM WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT. IDEALLY THIS COULD
COME IN THE PRESIDENT'S WELCOMING SPEECH. SO TOO
WILL BE THE IDEA THAT WE LOOK ON THE KING AS IMPORTANT
IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND THAT WE DO NOT SACRIFICE
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OUR FRIENDS. THIS LATTER POINT WILL HELP TO COUNTER CONTINUING PROBLEMS AT HOME RAISED BY THE FEAR THAT FOR THE US JORDAN WITHOUT HUSSEIN IS THE PLACE FOR THE PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. WE HAVE NO ARTFUL PHRASES TO OFFER AND MUST OF NECESSITY LEAVE THAT POINT TO WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, WHAT-EVER WE CAN SAY ON THIS POINT WOULD BE OF GREAT VALUE TO HIM HERE.
PICKERING

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